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Media Advisory

For immediate release: March 19, 2003

Winners of 2003 National Wetlands Awards Announced

Eight outstanding wetlands educators, activists, scientists, and conservationists were selected as recipients of the 2003 National Wetlands Awards for their exemplary contributions to the conservation and restoration of our nation's wetlands. The award winners will be honored at a ceremony on May 20th on Capitol Hill.

The National Wetlands Awards Program honors exceptional individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary effort, innovation, and excellence in wetlands conservation through programs or projects at the regional, state, or local level. "Wetlands are complex and extraordinary ecosystems that perform vital environmental functions," said Dale N. Bosworth, Chief of the USDA Forest Service. "They improve water quality by filtering pollutants and trapping sediment, provide wildlife habitat, and absorb rainfall to reduce flooding. The work of these award recipients to protect and restore our critical wetland resources is truly commendable."

This year's winners include: John Beal (Washington), David Carter (Iowa), Bryce and Brad Evans (Missouri), Paul Scott Hausmann (Wisconsin), Maggy Hurchalla (Florida), Neil Johnston (Alabama), and Graeme Lockaby (Alabama).

"I would like to congratulate the winners from across the U.S. who are working to preserve our nation's wetlands," said G. Tracy Mehan, III, Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "I look forward to meeting them when they are honored here in Washington, D.C."

"We are proud to support the National Wetlands Awards recognizing these individuals for their contributions to society and the aquatic environment," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, Director for the National Marine Fisheries Service. "Healthy wetlands and ecosystems are vital to our nation's recreational and commercial fish and shellfish fisheries, and other living marine resources."

Program co-sponsors—the Environmental Law Institute, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service—believe that recognizing these individuals for their efforts will ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy high quality wetlands, biological diversity, and clean water. "When wetlands disappear, essential habitats for hundreds of species of wildlife and plants also disappear," said Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "For people, wetland losses mean declines in water quality and increased flood risk."

The 2003 Award recipients were chosen by a high-level selection committee including Connie Cahanap (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Nancy Derey (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Abby Friedman (National Association of Counties), Bill Haglan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Eric Hutchins (NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service), Martha Joseph (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service), Jim King (California Coastal Conservancy), Moira McDonald (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), Leah Miller (Izaak Walton League of America), Bill Patrick (Louisiana State University), Karen Solari (USDA Forest Service), Bill Streever (BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.), Mark Sudol (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), and Gene Whitaker (Farm Bill Network).

For more information on the National Wetlands Award winners or for information on the ceremony, please contact Erica Pencak at the Environmental Law Institute at (202) 939-3822 or wetlandsawards@eli.org. You can visit the NWA website at www.eli.org/nwa/nwaprogram.htm.

2003 National Wetlands Awards Winners

Education/Outreach

Neil Johnston, Alabama

For the past 20 years, Johnston, an Alabama attorney and director of Project CATE (Conservation Action Through Education) Foundation Inc., has emphasized the importance of conservation education by developing and conducting professional seminars, speaking to local schools, and producing interactive wetland and endangered species curricula, including the award winning CD-Rom “Ribbit’s Big Splash.”

Science Research

Graeme Lockaby, Alabama

Lockaby is the principal scientist and coordinator for the Peaks of Excellence at Auburn University’s School of Forestry. His extensive wetland biochemistry research has led to over 100 publications and speaking engagements at national and regional meetings.

Volunteer Leadership

Maggy Hurchalla, Florida

During Hurchalla’s 20-year term as Martin County commissioner, she helped put in place the strongest wetlands protections in the nation. As a volunteer member of the working team for the Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study, she was instrumental in securing support for the use and restoration of a proposed 90,000-acre upland and wetland mosaic to provide water storage, nutrient reduction, and water quality improvements in the Florida Everglades.

Land Stewardship and Development

David Carter, Iowa

Carter has worked to build partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies and environmental organizations to permanently enroll and restore more than 9,000 acres of wetlands along the Missouri and Nishnabotna Rivers in wetland protection and restoration programs.

Bryce and Brad Evans, Missouri

Since 1993, Bryce and Brad Evans have developed wetland habitat on more than 9,000 acres on their farm in Missouri, and they are working to restore 17,000 acres of a wetland-upland complex.

Outstanding Wetlands Program Development

John Beal, Washington

Founder and president of the I’M A PAL Foundation (International Marine Association Protecting Aquatic Life), Beal has spent the past 23 years restoring wetlands and streams in Seattle, Washington.

Paul Scott Hausmann, Wisconsin

Throughout his 29-year career with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Hausmann led the state to become the first to implement Clean Water Act section 401 Water Quality Certification conditions on the section 404 Nationwide Permit Program, to establish water quality standards, and to pass legislation to fill the gaps created by the Supreme Court decision in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*.

ELI is an independent, non-profit research and educational organization based in Washington, DC. The Institute serves the environmental profession in business, government, the private bar, public interest organizations, academia, and the press.

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